



With the warm weather continuing to support grass growth, stock will hopefully have a long grazing period ahead of them well into autumn. With the combination of hot weather and downpours over these last few months, parasite burdens have remained fairly constant on pastures causing reduced performance and in some cases outbreaks of disease. As the grass available reduces and animals are grazing harder the incidence of issues may increase. Being vigilant for signs and knowing parasite levels prior to housing will mean we can preventatively manage stock during late grazing and at housing:

## 1) Husk/Lungworm

Hot spells followed by wet weather cause larvae already shed earlier in the summer to be spread on pastures. These then develop into infective larvae ready to be ingested by naive cattle.

Be vigilant for:

- Widespread coughing in groups especially after exercise
- Increased respiratory rate and difficulty breathing
- Rapid weight loss
- Milk drop in dairy cows
- Deaths in heavy infestations



when grazing permanent pastures in late summer.

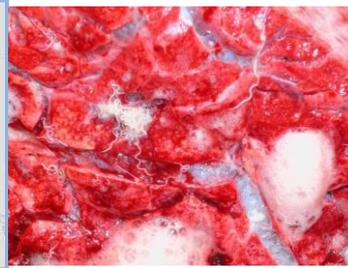
If cases are suspected then removal to 'safer' pastures e.g. aftermath or housing in well ventilated sheds is advisable. A wormer treatment should also be administered to kill

off residual larvae and adults (most are effective but check it covers *D. viviparus*).

Parasitic bronchitis can be confirmed by post-mortem (as seen in picture of the lung with white larvae seen). Detection of larvae in saliva or faecal samples can be done to establish exposure or a milk ELISA test can also be done in dairy cows.

Speak to us if you are concerned about your farm risk and how to prevent cases.

Farms that have a history of lungworm (*Dictyocaulus viviparus*) that are not vaccinating need to be extra vigilant especially



## 2) Coccidiosis – Youngstock

Coccidiosis is the second most common cause of diarrhoea in calves after Rotavirus and outbreaks often spike in frequency at this time of year.

**What?:** Coccidia are single-celled parasites (not bacteria) – not all species cause a problem

**Age:** Less than 2 years old (primarily 3 weeks to 6 months old) in **both housed and grazing** animals

**How?:** Spread between calves via the environment - eggs (oocysts) shed in faeces and survive for long periods despite heat, cold and most disinfectants

**Why?:** Damage the wall of the large intestine by replicating in the gut cells and then erupting out, damaging the cell. This creates a watery diarrhoea, resulting in straining with mucus and blood seen in the diarrhoea – long term gut damage.



Severe cases show depression, loss of appetite, weight loss and dehydration

**95% of cases are not diagnosed and so the key loss with cocci is poor weight gains**

**Diagnosis:** Collect individual or pooled muck samples and submit them to the lab – keep samples cool en route to stop eggs hatching and giving false negative result. There is no type, smell or colour of calf faeces that is diagnostic of cocci so samples are needed to confirm.

**Treat:** Completely separate animals with diarrhoea and treat according to diagnosis including fluid therapy. The rest of the group may also need a coccidiosis treatment depending on the prevalence – speak to us about timing and type of product – remember the parasite has already damaged the gut tissue when you see signs – this stunts performance long term.

**Prevention of cases requires excellent hygiene and management:**

1. Reduce stocking density
2. Regularly move feed and water troughs
3. Reduce faecal contamination of feed and water troughs - raise or cover and clean out frequently
4. Increasing bedding to reduce contamination/frequently rotate animals in paddocks
5. Avoid mixing different ages of calves
6. Clean and disinfect all buildings between groups of calves. It is important to use a disinfectant that claims effectiveness against coccidial oocysts. Steam cleaning can also be effective. Pastures remain infected for years after so don't put young calves in the same place year on year
7. In feed preventative medication can be used but is not a fix for poor management

### 3) Young stock - Blackleg

Clostridial diseases occur when livestock are at pasture ingesting soil contaminated grass. Blackleg is a very common disease for cattle and there is no warning and no particular scenario that we can advise about although the wet weather with poor grass coverage will be a major risk factor. Animals are often just found dead or seen as dull, depressed and with a very high temperature. Post mortem findings show dark muscles especially in legs and lumbar muscles where the muscle tissue is dead/dying. This is why animals often present with sudden onset lameness. Treatment is rarely successful unless started incredibly early.

Losses are inevitable so **just vaccinate cattle and sheep!**

Initial vaccination course of 2 doses (given 4-6 weeks apart) will cover the whole grazing season if given 2 weeks before turnout. Booster every 6 - 12 months to give continued immunity. Cattle can be vaccinated from as early as 2 weeks old. If the dam has her booster 8 to 2 weeks prior to calving then the calf will be covered until 12 weeks old.



### Calf Pneumonia

Whilst housing and calf pneumonia may seem a while away, now is the time to ensure herd immunity is established BEFORE the risk factors of housing and cold and wet weather.

**Is your farm vaccination policy out of date? Are your calves naive to pneumonia pathogens? Are you treating animals each winter for pneumonia without altering management and vaccination approaches?**

**Establish your farm pathogens – run 5 subsidised calf bloods from 12 week old animals** to find what disease/s you have on farm. We can then discuss which vaccines may be suitable for you, what management changes will reduce the challenge and how to stop spending so much on treatments. Ring us today to book in your blood tests and discuss how to get ahead of calf pneumonia!